

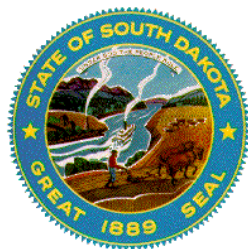
Privacy is an issue of concern for most of us who use the web. The greatest threat to your privacy may surprise you.

It's not the evil spammer who floods your mailbox, or the site owner who sells your information to other people without your permission.

It's not even the dreaded hacker, scouring the Net for unsecured machines to plunder for valuable data.

In all likelihood, it's you.

There are lots of ways you can make private information vulnerable without even knowing it. This brochure gives you tips on not giving information about yourself to people who shouldn't have it.



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**SOUTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Internet Privacy

Privacy Protection Tips



Call: 1-800-332-1782

1. Don't Let Strangers In The House.

The most important thing you can do to protect your privacy online is to have, and use, a good virus checker.

While viruses usually don't pose privacy threats, a good virus program also checks for and removes trojans. Some trojans can open your computer to remote control by anyone who has the right software. Once these virtual peeping Toms find computer that's been infected by the right sort of trojan, they can do anything they want with your machine.

It's fairly easy to avoid becoming infected by a trojan:

- Run a virus checker on every new program you install or attachment you receive.
- Regularly update your anti-virus software, and check your system for infection frequently.
- Download software only from reputable sites.

2. Lock Your Doors and "Windows."

Most cases of data getting into the wrong hands are from physical access to the machine where the data is stored. So, don't let people have free access to your computer. Don't write all your passwords down somewhere that a snoop can easily find.

Consider a firewall, which makes your computer virtually invisible to anyone on the network. Zone Alarm is a good firewall and it's free, easy to install and use.

You can get a free copy at:
<http://www.zonelabs.com/>

3. Keep the Curtains Closed.

Spammers grab email addresses from websites and email postings. If you forward a joke, virus warning, or other email to a group of people, a spammer can not only take your email contained on the email but also every address from previous forwards.

There are file download utilities and a number of ad supported software programs that report information back to their creators. Spy software can be purchased under the pretense of monitoring employees or children's internet access. Such programs can be used to gather sensitive information, passwords and emails from unsuspecting users. Spyware programs can capture keystrokes so that everything you type is stored in a secret buffer on the machine.

To check your computer for "spyware" programs, you may obtain anti-spyware detection programs such as Xblock's free Xcleaner Lite at <http://www.xblock.com>.

4. Be Careful What You Say To Strangers.

Watch what you post in chat rooms or discussion lists. Too often, there are several lurkers (people who don't post at all), for every one person posting.

When you fill out forms on websites, don't give more information than needed. If you are subscribing to a free newsletter, the publisher really only needs your email address. Be sure to check privacy policies carefully. Check to see if there is an "opt out" box where you can indicate that you do not want further emails.

Privacy should be respected by every person or business on the Net. Until the day comes when you can be assured that your privacy is being honored, you should continue to lock your doors and windows.

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